

## PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Between

Humanists UK and

\_\_\_\_\_ (referred to as “the group”)

### Introduction

- This is a statement of intent not a legally binding document. Either side can advise the other of their withdrawal from the agreement at any time.
- The group remains an independent entity, with its own leadership, membership arrangements, governance and financial accountability.
- The title of any local group should be “[Place name] Humanists” [for more information by this please read [this article](#) from the International Humanist and Ethical Union]
- The agreement has no impact on the charitable aims and status of Humanists UK or the group (*if applicable*). In the unlikely event of a conflict between this agreement and the group’s or Humanists UK’s charitable aims and objectives, the relevant charitable aims and objectives will always take precedence.
- It is recognised that the commitments of both sides will be subject to available resources and capabilities.
- By signing this agreement, the group confirms that it has at least:
  - 2 active officers who are also members of Humanists UK, and
  - 10 group members and/or at least a typical attendance of 6 people at its regular meetings.

*Entering into this Partnership Agreement does not mean that everyone in the group will be committed to sharing Humanists UK’s view on all issues. That would be an impossible and undesirable aim for a group of freethinkers who believe in advancing their views through new information and ideas. Nor does it mean that the shared aims, values and policies could not or will not be changed. It simply means that the group and Humanists UK gain maximum benefit from being members of the wider humanist community, and external bodies - such as Local Authorities, the press, or other players on SACREs or “Inter Faith” forums - receive a reasonably consistent message about humanist aims and values.*

### What the Partner group can expect from Humanists UK

Within Humanists UK’s financial and resource constraints, and taking into account the specific situation of the group, Humanists UK commits to the following:

#### Members and supporters

Inclusion of group details (along with details of other groups if appropriate) on the Humanists UK website drop-down seen by all new joiners and supporters, with a request for them to allow personal details to be forwarded to the relevant group.
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Inclusion of group details (along with those of other groups) in information provided to new Humanists UK members joining by conventional mail.
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Forwarding to the group Membership Secretary or equivalent, under appropriate conditions of confidentiality, contact details of Humanists UK members and supporters in the group's area who wish to join or become supporters of the group and who have indicated willingness for their personal details to be forwarded.

Inclusion of group on listing on the Humanists UK website groups pages and the Humanists UK Groups' Google Map.

Inclusion of group in material sent to all new Humanists UK members as well as general promotion of local humanism on Humanists UK forms and publications (including a clear explanation of the difference between Humanists UK membership and local group membership).

*One-off promotion to existing Humanists UK members who are not group members and who are accessible by email on similar basis to the offer for new members (and noting local group membership incentives).*

*One-off promotion to group members and supporters who are not Humanists UK members of 18-for-12 month offer of Humanists UK membership.*

### **Humanists UK Local Representatives**

Identify with the group one or more suitable group members, in most cases including the group leader, to be "Humanists UK Local Representatives" authorised to represent Humanists UK locally, for example in interactions with local and regional authorities and associated bodies.

Recognise that the presence of a Humanists UK Local Representative in a group does not inhibit other group members from expressing their views. But only Humanists UK Local Representatives can claim to speak for Humanists UK.

*Impact on Local Development Volunteer scheme (2007): There will be no separate Local Development Volunteers (LDVs) in areas covered by the Partner group. Any LDVs who remain active in the group's area will be offered the opportunity to become Humanists UK Local Representatives within the local group.*

### **Board access and general meetings**

Make available two members of Humanists UK Board of Trustees nominated by the Chair as focal points to Partner groups with whom they can raise any issues that cannot be resolved through discussion with Humanists UK management and staff (which remains the primary route).

Enable the group to submit motions to Humanists UK General Meetings, including the AGM (with Emergency Motions not requiring a seconder).

### **Policy consultation and communication**

Keep Partners abreast of proposed changes to Humanists UK policies, provide statements of existing Humanists UK policies, and offer opportunities to provide comments on any significant policy developments (*not applicable to tactical implementation, where rapid action is frequently necessary, or policies relating to the internal management of Humanists UK*).

Ensure good quality, timely communication to the group (including Humanists UK Local Representatives) of Humanists UK policies and developments.

### **Networking and interaction**

Arrange with the group for a Humanists UK staff member, Trustee or other representative to visit the group at least every 24 months (with Humanists UK taking a share of the travel costs if they are beyond the group's resources).

Support and encourage constructive working together with other local organisations - humanist, secular, religious and non-religious - where there are common interests. Where appropriate, work with the head offices of these other organisations to facilitate local groups working together.

Using web and other means, actively stimulate and encourage informal networking between local groups for the sharing of ideas and best practices and, where appropriate, draw on the expertise of the group to help advise other groups.

Invite the group to send representatives to Group Representatives Annual Meeting (GRAM) and regional meetings if appropriate.

**Operational services and fees**

Review and set group Partnership fees taking into account Humanists UK costs and group capabilities.

Provide expert support and advice for local campaigns in support of Humanists UK policies.

Ensure the efficient administration of Humanists UK /local group interface, including:

- Timely updating of group information on the Humanists UK website, communications and databases, (on the basis of information provided by the local group).
- Striving to answer queries from groups in a timely manner.
- Advising the group of all Humanists UK -accredited Celebrants working in their area and any relevant changes in the Celebrant Network.
- Providing periodic reminders of the services provided by Humanists UK to local groups

**Positive Humanism**

At national level, raise awareness of/publicity about Humanism as a positive identity.

Support and encourage local groups to help members develop the positive aspects of a humanist life-stance, where possible sharing best practices from other humanist and non-humanist groups and organisations.

**Resources**

Make available to the group:

The right to state Partnership with Humanists UK on group headed paper and other materials, and use of defined ‘Happy Human’ group images

Cover for group meetings and events under the Humanists UK Public Liability Insurance (*details as per policy*)

Bi-monthly pack including information and campaign resources

Groups Network newsletter by email, ten or more free copies of each issue of Humanists UK News

Discounts on bulk orders of publications and other products from the Humanists UK shop

Leaflets and other materials that can be used by the group when communicating externally or with those new to Humanism (perhaps including generic leaflets that can be customised by local groups)

Briefing packs and slide packs on key topics, drawing where appropriate on the experience and expertise of successful local groups\*.

Free web hosting if required.

Training on key topics (*for example via training days, on-line virtual training, Open Days for new committee members*)

Free copy of each new Humanists UK publication

Publicity tools such as pop-up banners and give-aways, at-cost

Free-of-charge ad hoc mailings of the group's materials to Humanists UK members and supporters in the area (by mutual agreement)

On-line listing of potential speakers and topics for meetings (*based largely on inputs uploaded directly by local groups*); ad hoc support for engagement with/tours by “big names” if required.

*(Potentially – subject to demand)* Access to standard letterhead, membership cards, posters and other stationery at bulk prices.

\*These could include topics such as:

- *How to attract and retain active members.*
- *How to cooperate with other local groups with similar interests.*
- *How to campaign against the establishment of a faith school.*
- *How to attract younger/more diverse members*
- *How to get the most out of social media*
- *How to establish links with SACREs, schools, voluntary organisations, “Inter-faith” groups*
- *How to get the most out of local media*
- *How to deal with Councillors and Council Officers*
- *How to interact with local faith groups*
- *How to respond to “Frequently Asked Questions” from the press*

**Review**

Constructively engage with the group in periodic reviews of how well this agreement is working in practice as seen from both sides, and agree action on any improvements identified.

Own and maintain wording of standard agreements, updating if necessary following consultation with all affected groups.

*In the case of competition for limited Humanists UK resources between a Partner and an Affiliate, the Partner would normally be given priority.*

**What Humanists UK (and other groups) can expect from the Partner Group**

Subject to its available resources and capabilities, the group commits to the following. The agreement recognises that available group resources and expertise may in practice limit its ability of the group to pursue campaigns or other activities.

**Humanist community**

Make a positive contribution to Humanism locally by providing a local forum for humanists to meet, to develop their knowledge and thinking, and to develop the sense of a local community of humanists within the wider local community.

Ensure a warm welcome for new members, supporters and others with a genuine interest in Humanism regardless of age, sexual orientation, academic attainment, email/Internet connection/skills or disability<sup>1</sup>.

Provide newcomers with “What is Humanism?” information at the earliest opportunity.

Arrange a programme of events and keep all group members informed.

**Members and supporters**

Offer a significant introductory group membership concession to Humanists UK members/new joiners who wish also to join the group.

Make contact with new Humanists UK members and supporters whose names and contact details have been passed on by Humanists UK *(within a maximum of 2 weeks of receipt if feasible)*.

Actively encourage group members to join Humanists UK, and pass on contact details of group members who are willing for their information to be shared to the relevant Humanists UK staff (under appropriate conditions of confidentiality).

<sup>1</sup> Wheelchair access or other special provision for meetings and events remains a local group decision.

Encourage group supporters who are not paid-up members to sign-up for the Humanists UK e-Bulletin and be registered as Humanists UK supporters

**Alignment in external activities and dealings with third parties**

In external activities and dealings with third parties: support the Humanists UK’s aims, strategy, policies and values, within the group’s resources and capabilities, and taking into account local circumstances. The group will not take any action that brings Humanism or Humanists UK into disrepute.

**Humanists UK Local Representatives and focal point**

Identify with Humanists UK one or more suitable group members to be “Humanists UK Local Representatives”.

Identify to Humanists UK a Focal Point (probably one of the Humanists UK Local Representatives) if required for 1:1 dialogue and information sharing.

**Representation of Humanism locally**

Engage with local Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs), “Inter-Faith” bodies, local schools and other local bodies where it makes sense, while upholding Humanists UK aims, values and policies. *(If invited to participate in external bodies such as these, the group decides who will be its representatives. It is anticipated that many groups will select members who are also Humanists UK Local Representatives.)*

Act locally to increase understanding and promotion of Humanism as a positive world view

Maintain a public Internet presence

**Campaigns**

Campaign on local issues in line with Humanists UK policies (for example, on faith schools), taking into account local community needs and circumstances, as well as group capabilities.

Support national campaigns locally, for example by encouraging people to write to their MP

**Celebrants**

In recognition of the importance of Humanist Celebrants in the promotion of Humanism, respond positively to requests from local Humanists UK -accredited Celebrant to be included in the relevant section of the group’s website, making clear on the website that the person is a member of the ‘Humanist Ceremonies (tm) network’. *(Applicable whether or not the Celebrant is a member of the group, and whether or not the group’s website also lists non- Humanists UK accredited Celebrants.)*

Seek to develop and maintain mutually supportive relationships with local members of the ‘Humanist Ceremonies (tm) network’ where opportunities for reciprocity exist.

**Finance**

Maintain the financial viability of the group

Decide group membership policy & set fees, taking into account any learning available from others.

Pay the relevant Humanists UK Partnership annual fee on time.

**Networking and interaction**

Actively support development and maintenance of the Groups Network, contributing group learning and advice where appropriate.

Provide timely input and feedback on any Humanists UK policy consultations

At least annually, provide input to the list of speakers and topics that Humanists UK maintains for use by other groups.

Where possible, link with any local student societies affiliated to the Humanist Students member societies.

Work constructively with other local organisations – humanist, secular, religious and non-religious - where there are common interests.

**Data reporting and confidentiality** Provide to Humanists UK:

Annually: data on numbers of members and registered supporters and typical meeting attendance.

Annually (and within one month of any change): names and contact details of group Officers, Focal Point/Authorised individuals (to ensure efficient communications)

Annually (and within one month of any change): details of changes to meeting venues and any other information for inclusion on the Humanists UK website

At all times, safeguard the confidentiality of membership information, and any other information communicated in confidence by Humanists UK.

**Constitution**

Have in place a written group constitution (which may be short and simple) including provision for:

- Elections for group Officers at least every 2 years, with all group members given adequate notice of the meeting at which they can vote, and
- A means to refuse or withdraw group membership from any member who fails to support the constitution or Partnership Agreement, or who brings Humanists UK or the group into disrepute.

**Other affiliations**

The group may choose to be affiliated to the National Secular Society, United Nations Association, local CVS and/or other similar bodies.

The group will not affiliate to, or publicly support, any political party.

In the unlikely event of conflict between activities in support of any other organisations to which the group is affiliated or associated and those in support of the Humanists UK’s aims values and policies, the Partners group will give priority to this agreement.

**Review**

Constructively engage with Humanists UK in periodic reviews of how well this agreement is working in practice as seen from both sides, and agree action on any improvements identified.

The agreement may be established either by exchange of emails or by both parties signing below two paper copies of the agreement, one of which should be retained by Humanists UK and the other by the group.

**Signed/dated for Humanists UK by:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed/dated for the Partner group by:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Issued by: Andrew Copson, Humanists UK Chief Executive, 30 Sep 2011*